4: Hockings B-5 (1962-1977) 1980
AW50 Badaga AW50

saying anything." The man remained quiet. Then the exorcist rubbed his hand around the plate of rice, and while staring at the woman said some spells. Next he told her to come back to her own seat, and she did. Then he again told the ghost it was past 0800 hrs. and the ghost had not yet left. It replied that it would go if it were given music, hymn-singing and a picture of Murugan. Then, on a relative's suggestion, the proceedings were postponed. That evening they held a *pu:ja* in one of the houses, with this same exorcist in charge. He gave a small religious picture to the ghost, and it went away—if indeed it was ever there!

Other Mental Disturbances

8.7. Cases of insanity are rarely observed in Badaga villages, not because of their infrequency but because the victims are usually killed off by their relatives with an over-dose of opium hidden in some food. In 1970 a madman hobbled with chains could however be seen in one village, but this was very unusual. Insanity is thought to be caused by a demoness, *Ka:teri pe:* who possesses a man, takes his food from him, will not leave him, and ultimately brings exhaustion by not letting him rest properly.

8.8. Witchcraft accusations are common in many parts of India (Epstein 1959), but among the Badagas this kind of paranoid behaviour does not occur *within* the community. Witchcraft is nonetheless present, but it is only the Kurumba and Irula sorcerers and occasional Todas (Rivers 1906: 262; Francis 1908: 144) whom Badagas accuse of it. This displacement of anxiety onto members of another tribe probably helps reduce it effectively. In one recent case a newly married man was apparently experiencing sexual frustrations with his wife: at any rate, he claimed that very often as he slept with his wife at night in a room off the veranda a Kurumba came, separated the two, and built a low brick wall in the bed between them. Such a thing could occur, it was believed, because the Kurumbas had the power to open a bolted door from the outside. The only known way to curtail a Kurumba's powers is to either knock out one of his teeth or cut off his hair (and probably burn it). Important in the containment of witchcraft is the fact that each cluster of Badaga villages appoints a Kurumba sorcerer to protect those Badagas from the sorcery of his fellow tribesmen. His concern for the welfare of his Badaga hosts is expressed symbolically by the key role he plays

692 Lingam 1957). At each successive level in this process the headman will consider the decision of the previous lower-level hearings. Usually he will offer the same judgment, yet sometimes he may not only reverse the decision but also fine the headmen who have given a "wrong judgment". This right of the superior headmen is -- or, to be more accurate, was -- an important means of social control.

178 626 692 Until the end of the last century this system was functioning to the exclusion of the official Indian legal system, for no Badaga would risk the punishment of ostracism which could be expected for taking a case to a magistrate. A 19th Century Badaga proverb warned that, "If you take a complaint to a magistrate, it is as if you had put poison in your adversary's food". During the decades that this was in common use, there was a rigid set of punishments merited by specific crimes; and this was said to have replaced an earlier system of lex talionis in pre-British days. The Badagas would hang a man whom they had themselves found guilty of murder (unless the British officials heard about the case in time); for certain other severe crimes, including conversion to Christianity, ostracism or banishment was meted out. Apart from these punishments there were various demeaning and unproductive tasks that an offender might be ordered to perform; or his head might be shaved; or one of the standard fines could be levied. Among the Badagas of the 19th Century the only fines were in cattle, household items, foodstuffs, and coin to the value of Rs. 1/4, 1/2, 1, 3, 6, 12, 24, and 48. No intermediate or higher sums were demanded at that time; but in the present century the rates have increased and once a fine of Rs. 5000 (about $1060 U.S.) was levied by a Badaga council in a very serious case. There are detailed regulations for the fixing and payment of fines.

681 (682) (688)

648 The relationship between the communities of the plateau was not solely

8: Hockings E-S (1962-1977) 1982 AN50 Badaga AN50

1. Kinship Behaviour

It is not possible to present the Badaga kinship system here in such a way that it fully explains Badaga behaviour, even that sort which we anthropologists usually call kinship behaviour. Any actions occurring in the social setting of two or more persons who consider themselves to be "related" may well have motivations that lie in such spheres as the practice of agriculture, the accumulation of political power, the acquisition of wealth, or the display of education—as well as in so-called kinship obligations. One can thus argue that the presentation of a system of kinship terminology does very little in the way of explaining behaviour, even though it is concerned with the labelling of actors in a wide variety of interactional situations.[1]

We will be confining ourselves, in the following pages, to two interconnected facets of kinship: *(a)* the system of terminology by which Badagas identify certain others as sharing ancestors and responsibilities with them, i.e., "being related"; and *(b)* the manipulations of this system so as to arrange marriage, transfer ownership of land, and assign responsibility for performing life-cyle rituals amongst one's "relatives."

That familial interaction is not necessarily dominated by kinship obligations or guided by high ideals of behaviour may be illustrated at the outset by an example taken from my fieldnotes:

> Over twenty years ago a well-to-do landowner was in hospital for a relatively minor complaint, and after a few days was discharged as cured. He returned to the village where he lived with his several adult sons, and died that same night. The next morning his body was cremated in the usual manner. The likely facts behind this series of events, as seen by those close to the family, were these. The old man, who was blind, was a Hindu, but had felt gratitude towards the local Christians on a number of counts. In his last years he had given several small plots of his own land to Christians, which had irritated his sons immensely. In concert, therefore, they had taken advantage of his release from the hospital to poison him, and of course arranged for his cremation immediately afterwards. In short, they had placed maintenance of their patrimony very much ahead of the traditional loyalty to parents which is supposed to be a prime Badaga—and Hindu—value. Descent and residence were assured already; now the inheritance had to be secured.

Even if this example proved inaccurate in some details, it could be paralleled by similar stories from any number of villages. In each case we would find that while rules for intrafamilial conduct do exist, as one central part of the Badagas' cultural tradition, personal considerations of one sort or another will very often modify the behaviour in quite unpredictable ways. The distinction between rules, i.e., institutional norms, and practice, i.e., the behaviour of individuals, will be a theme running through much of this paper.

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